

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Cowper.*



THE LITTLE HOUSEKEEPER.

HIS ONLY ENEMY.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE INCENDIARY.

THE destruction of Harford's factory formed an exciting topic of conversation for the inhabitants of Deanfield, and the excitement was greatly heightened by the circulation of certain mysterious rumours to the effect that the fire had been the work of an incendiary. The closest investigation failed to unravel the mystery, though it was proved beyond doubt that

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some person or persons unknown had wilfully and maliciously fired the factory in two separate places. Many sagacious heads had been puzzled in vain in the effort to assign a motive for the act. The firm of Harford Brothers was so widely known and respected for their uniform liberality and just dealing, that it seemed improbable that any one had done it out of personal ill-will. The workmen, to a man, indignantly repudiated the idea of any one among them having a secret enmity against the masters; and the

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fact that they were all holiday-making at The Elms was a sufficient proof of their innocence, had proof been necessary.

For several days the blackened ruins formed a centre of attraction to crowds of the townspeople, who gathered round it in groups, discussing the event with many expressions of sympathy for the firm, and much commiseration for the large number of workmen who had thus suddenly been thrown out of employment.

It was the first evening after the fire, which had been smouldering all day among the charred débris of the building. As evening drew on, the increasing crowd rendered it necessary to post additional policemen on guard to ensure the preservation of order, and prevent the possibility of accidents.

"A sad business this fire, neighbour," remarked a sturdy butcher, addressing a friend, who, like himself, had taken a stroll in the direction of what was once Harford's factory.

"Aye, sad enough for a good many," was the answer given, with a sympathetic shake of the head; "it's a sorry wind-up for the men's treat which took place yesterday."

"Aye, it is; and I doubt it will be a bad job for them, poor chaps," continued the first speaker. "No work means no wages, and that means no bread. I'm downright sorry for them. The 'Deanfield Herald' says the governors are well insured, so they are all right, unless what I hear is true."

"What was that? What did you hear?"

"Let's cross to the other side of the road, where there's more standing room, then I'll tell you."

They moved away, unconscious that they were causing much disappointment to a third person who had been an unsuspected listener to their conversation. Neither the worthy butcher nor his friend had noticed how eagerly a man who stood by them was listening to all they said. This man was about thirty-five or six, tall and thin, with a contraction of the shoulders, as though he had been accustomed to stoop over a desk. He was dressed in rusty, threadbare black, that gave him an air of decayed gentility, in which there was something inexpressibly painful and forlorn, as though he had been rather hardly dealt with by the world. It was a face suggestive of strong individuality, and gave the impression of strong will and determination of purpose. But it was not one of the faces that inspire ready confidence and excite no misgivings as to the character of the inner man. The mouth was decidedly morose, and the dull, deep-set eyes had a repressed fire that might flame out fiercely upon any provocation. That was one reason why Bernard Spenser found himself little liked or sought after. He had the expression of a man holding a standing grudge against his kind; one of those unhappy, discontented spirits who have an avowed enmity to existing institutions, and find in everything subject for censure and complaint. The talk of the two men had apparently some powerful attraction for him. When they moved away he stood scowling after them for a few seconds as if irresolute whether to follow, but a noisy group of apprentice boys crossing the road in the same direction, decided him to give up the idea. He turned sullenly away, muttering, "What's the use of giving myself the trouble to play eavesdropper to yonder stupid clowns? If there's any fresh news I shall hear it soon enough. The town seems to be going crazy over last night's fire; the bazaar and the great

cattle show were nothing to it." Thus talking to himself the man passed on, striking into the thick of the crowd.

"Surely it's not true, Will! An incendiary fire! I haven't heard of such a thing since the summer that Farmer Bennet's hayricks were fired by that scoundrel of a tramp. I shall be glad to find that it isn't true, lad; Allen Harford is such a good fellow that it is hard to believe he has got any enemies."

It was Farmer Chiffin's ringing voice that suddenly startled the man Spenser as he and his son stopped a few paces from, and stood with their faces turned towards, the ruins of the huge block of building which yesterday had looked so secure and unassailable in its strength.

The son shook his head as he answered his father, "One hardly knows what to believe; but the firemen state that there is no doubt about its being the work of an incendiary."

"Well, I hope the villain will be brought to justice, whoever he is; and I would give a good round sum of my own to help to bring him there."

Farmer Chiffin spoke excitedly, wiping his flushed face with a flaming silk handkerchief that might have done duty as a danger signal-flag on a railway.

"So would I, father," Will Chiffin replied, in hearty response, adding, "I have the 'Deanfield Evening News' for Sally, and from what it states the police seem very sanguine of being able to arrest the culprit, as they believe they have a clue that will lead to his detection."

Bernard Spenser, who had stood listening as if rooted to the spot, involuntarily started as Will uttered the last words, and his lips had grown white, but they were well hidden under his dark, unshaven beard. The Chiffins were known to him, and he was glad to have escaped their recognition.

"So that is the news." With these words, spoken under his breath, and a nervous glance at the faces of those near him, he hurried away, leaving behind him the ruined building and the crowd, and gaining the welcome quiet of one of the short new streets that were gradually transforming that rural suburb into a portion of the town. This street comprised two uniform lines of small, neat-looking cottages, with a diminutive slice of garden allotted to each, and enclosed by a wooden palisade and gate, painted a bright green. Most of the cottages were tenanted by workmen employed at Harford's factory. Trim, comfortable homes they looked, with the warm gleam of firelight shining out from the windows upon the chill autumn dusk, but none knew better than Bernard Spenser how the calamity of last night's fire would be felt there; how it would overshadow those humble hearths, bring care and privation and cruel anxiety as to the prospects of the coming winter. He hurried on, apparently absorbed in his own thoughts, and so completely self-engrossed as to be unobservant of anything on his way. His gloomy abstraction continued until he reached the end of the street and the gate of the last cottage in the row. There he roused himself, and his whole manner seemed to change as he passed slowly up the short gravel walk and stood on the doorstep searching his pockets for a latch-key. Even his face underwent a strange softening, like the sudden lifting of a dark cloud; the frowning brows unbent, and the set, sullen mouth relaxed. His head was no longer depressed upon his chest, with the weary look of one breaking down under a burden. He held it erect as he stood

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fitting the key in the latch. Then he went in and closed the door, a man looking years younger than the sullen-browed misanthrope who had made his visit of inspection to the ruins of the factory and twice played the part of eavesdropper in the crowd. That belonged to the reverse side of his picture, the darker realities which he strove to leave outside that threshold. There he seemed to take on another nature, something softer and gentler, better fitted for the presence of his only child, the little motherless girl whose companionship was the one saving influence of his life. He felt his way noiselessly along the narrow passage to the little back room which served both for parlour and kitchen, pausing a moment before he turned the handle of the door, for he had caught the words of a well-known hymn sung by the sweet child-voice that made all the music life had for him. The little room was barely furnished, but it was scrupulously clean and neat, and the presence of the child-housekeeper made it home. There were signs of loving preparation for his return in the simmering little teapot on the hob and the tray laid ready with his cup and saucer.

Little Janie had left nothing undone; she sat close to the table, so that the light of the lamp could fall upon her work. Before her was spread out sorted skeins of many-tinted silks and fine wools that made bright patches of colour upon the table. With wonderful swiftness and skill, the child worked on from day to day, embroidering canvas for fire-screens, cushions, covers, and other articles. The embroidery found a ready sale at the principal fancy workshops in Deanfield. They were always glad to employ little Janie, who seemed to have a natural genius for the work in which she had been initiated by her mother, who had been dead about twelve months. Janie was not thirteen years old, small and slight for her age, and very simple and childlike, though there was an air of premature womanliness about her that made her seem at times quaint and old-fashioned. There was an impression of thought and a certain sense of responsibility and self-dependence that must have been the result of circumstances. Her short life-story was all told in her small, pale face and serious grey eyes. She had been her sick mother's devoted little nurse, as she was now her father's housekeeper and helper, for latterly it had been owing to her exertions that starvation had been warded off from the little household. Thus she was bearing her daily burden of cares, anxious about many things which should not have found a place in her child-life for years yet to come.

Softly fell the words of the hymn as Bernard Spenser passed into the kitchen without attracting the attention of the singer; but, getting from her chair to pick up a skein of silk that had fallen, she chanced to turn her face towards him. There was a little joyful start and a glad cry of welcome; in all her life she had never shrunk from him with anything like fear or distrust. Whatever he might be to others, the man was all love and tenderness to his little daughter. "I never heard you open the door, father; how did you come in?"

He smiled, thereby making himself still more unlike the sombre-faced man in the crowd.

"How did I come in?" he repeated, as if amused by the question. "Not through the key-hole, you may be sure, little lady; I am hardly small enough for that."

"You must have got in by the key-hole, father, and there's the key in your hand to prove it." And with a sagacious shake of the head, she went up to him to receive her accustomed kiss.

"You are getting very sharp, little lady, and wonderfully wise."

"Do you mean sharp at finding things out, father?" she queried, with a pleased laugh.

"Yes, that is what I mean, Janie."

But even as he spoke some of the fight went out from his face. The child's last words had been unpleasantly suggestive to him, calling up all that he was most anxious to forget, thoughts which suggested to him the possibility of Janie finding out all the hidden evil in his life.

He knew his child thought him all that was good and clever, and he shivered with the miserable self-consciousness of how little he deserved her good opinion, and how unworthy he was of her love, which he valued above everything in the world.

"You stayed away a long time to-day, father."

He answered, hastily, "Yes, I have been longer than I expected. Did you get frightened, Janie?"

"Yes, a little, when it got so much past your time; but I thought you were stopping at the factory. They say nearly everybody has been to see the ruins, for it's the biggest fire that has ever been in Deanfield."

"Where did you hear all this, child?" he asked, nervously, and with a startled look in his eyes.

"At the door, father, when I went to look for you; the neighbours were talking about it in the street, and Jessie Price and Lizzie were crying because it will put their father out of work, and they will have no money to buy bread."

"Did you hear anything else, Janie?"

He had unconsciously lowered his voice almost to a whisper, and there was something of apprehension in his manner as he waited for her answer.

"Yes, father, I heard something else, and it was dreadful. They said some wicked person had set the factory on fire purposely. Do you think it is true, father?"

The earnest grey eyes were fastened on his face, which had changed to a dull ashen hue. There was no escaping their steady gaze, and no way of avoiding the necessity of answering her question. His voice trembled a little as he said, slowly, "You—you must not believe all you hear; the person may have set it on fire accidentally, and not like to confess. Mind I don't affirm anything, and you must remember that it's all guesswork; no one can prove who did it."

He uttered the last words with a strange excitement, which surprised and frightened his daughter.

After a moment's hesitation, she inquired, anxiously, "Are you angry, father?"

"No, no, child, only a little tired."

A short silence ensued, then Janie resumed the subject of the fire, which seemed to dwell on her mind.

"They say it couldn't be an accident, father, because it was in two places. How very wicked that person must be. It's dreadful to know there are such bad people in the world. I shall pray for God to make him sorry for all the harm he has done."

Long after Janie had gone upstairs to her little bed and was sleeping the happy sleep of innocence and childhood, her father sat downstairs, crouching over

the burnt-out embers of the kitchen fire, with a look of care on his face, thinking of his child. How the look in her grey eyes haunted him, as he recalled her talk about the fire, and thought of the prayer which she had promised to offer up for the evil-doer!

BRITISH ORCHIDS.

IN the "Leisure Hour" for 1874 (p. 352) a short descriptive account was given of the British orchids which are to be found in flower in spring. Several which produce their flowers later in the year were only just referred to; and to many readers some particulars respecting these may now be interesting.

The rarest of our native orchids is the *Cypripedium Calceolus* (the Common Lady's-slipper), which was formerly found in woods on limestone in several parts of England (more particularly in Yorkshire and in the county of Durham), but which in a wild state is now very nearly if not quite extinct, owing to the very reprehensible avidity of collectors. This interesting plant has a creeping rootstock, an erect stem from nine to eighteen inches high, with leafless sheaths at the base, and several oval sheathing leaves. The flowers are produced in early summer, usually only one on each stem; the sepals and petals (from an inch to an inch and a half in length) are of a dark maroon colour, while the labellum (more than an inch in length and three-quarters of an inch in depth) is of a pale yellow.

Another rather rare British orchid is the *Malaxis paludosa* (the Bog Orchis), which is found in bogs on sphagnum (bog-moss) in several parts of England, in Scotland, and in Ireland. The stem of this little plant is slender, and from one to four inches in height, the rootstock being a bulb clothed with soft whitish sheaths. The flowers are of a greenish-yellow, and are produced in a spike-like raceme late in summer (generally in August and September). The leaves of this little orchid are often fringed with small papillæ (which the late Professor Henslow ascertained to be minute bulb-like gemmæ), by which the plant can be more certainly propagated than by seeds.

Aceras anthropophora (the Man Orchis, from the whole flower presenting a ludicrous effigy of the human frame) is also a rather scarce orchid, which is found in chalk-pits and on banks and the borders of fields, on chalky soil in the south-eastern counties of England. The flowers are produced in a spike in June; they are of a yellowish-green, frequently more or less tinged with maroon or dull brownish-red, especially on the labellum.

The *Corallorrhiza innata* (the Common Coral-root) must also be classed among the rare British orchids. It is found in boggy woods in several counties in Scotland: the rootstock is fleshy, of a pale yellowish colour, branched, and resembling coral; the stem, from three to ten inches in height, has a few sheaths, but no green leaves; the flowers, which appear in July, are small, whitish, with a few raised purplish spots.

The *Liparis Loeselii* (the Fen Orchis), found in spongy bogs in the eastern counties of England, has now become rare from the drainage of the fens. It grows about six inches high, having two large bright green leaves, and an oval bulb at the base. The

flowers are yellow, and are produced in a spike, from one to four inches in length, in July.

The *Epipogon aphyllum* (the Leafless Epipogon) is very rare indeed, having been found once only in damp woods in Herefordshire. The rootstock is fleshy, of a pale brown, branched, and resembling coral, similar to the root of the *Corallorrhiza*; the stem is also fleshy, from three to ten inches in height, yellowish, and without green leaves; the flowers are produced late in the summer, either singly or in a raceme of from two to seven flowers; the sepals and petals are of a pale yellowish colour; the labellum is white streaked with crimson.

The *Neottia Nidus-avis* (the Bird's-nest Orchis) is found in many parts of England in moist woods and coves, especially on chalky soils, growing amongst dead leaves; it is not so common in Scotland, and it is very rarely found in Ireland. The rootstock is creeping; the stem is fleshy, tubular, and about a foot high; the flowers are produced in June in a lax spike. The whole plant, including the flowers, is of a dingy yellowish-brown, with a tinge of purple occasionally about the upper part of the stem.

The *Listera cordata* (the Lesser Tway Blade) is found in damp places on heaths and in open woods. It is rare in the south of England, but more frequent in the north and in Scotland. It has a very slender creeping rootstock; the stem is from two to nine inches in length, bearing, about half-way up, two rather small, nearly opposite, heart-shaped leaves; the flowers are green, or greenish-brown, very small, and are produced in a short spike in July and August.

The *Listera ovata* (the Common Tway Blade) is a more common species, and is frequently found in woods and moist pastures. The stem is more than a foot in height, with two leaves about the middle. The rather numerous yellowish-green flowers are produced in a lax raceme in June.

The *Goodyera repens* (the Creeping Lady's Tresses) is found abundantly in fir-woods in the north of Scotland. The small whitish flowers (nearly all of which point to one side) are produced, in a slightly-twisted spike, in August.

Of the three species of *Spiranthes*, two are very rare, viz., *S. aestivalis* (the Summer Lady's Tresses), which is found in flower in July and August, in bogs in Hampshire and in Worcestershire; and *S. gemmifera* (the Proliferous Lady's Tresses), which flowers in October, and is found in pastures only in Ireland. The other and more common species is *S. autumnalis* (the Autumnal Lady's Tresses). This is found in pastures and on banks on chalky and limestone soils in many parts of England.

Of the genus *Cephalanthera* there are three species—viz., *C. rubra* (the Red Helleborine), which is very rare, and which has been found in woods and bushy places on chalky soil in Somersetshire and in one or two other parts of England, the bright rose-coloured flowers appearing in June; *C. ensifolia* (the Long-leaved Helleborine), which is found in woods in many parts of Great Britain, the whitish flowers appearing in June; and *C. grandiflora* (the Large White Helleborine), which is frequently found in the south of England in woods and bushy places on chalky soils, but which is rare in the north; the large white flowers are produced in a spike from three to five inches in length in June and July.

There are three species of *Epipactis*: *E. palustris* (the Marsh Helleborine), which is found in marshes and swampy meadows in several parts of England,

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but is rare in Scotland and in Ireland; the flowers appear in July; the petals and lip are rose-coloured and white, the latter with a yellow central line at the base, and with the middle lobe beautifully crenated; *E. purpurata* (the Purple-leaved Helleborine); and *E. latifolia* (the Broad-leaved Helleborine), the flowers of which appear in July and August in shady woods and thickets, chiefly in mountainous districts and on calcareous soils.

Of *Gymnadenia* there are two species, viz., *G. conopsea* (the Fragrant Gymnadenia), and *G. albida* (the Small White Gymnadenia). *G. conopsea* is found in bogs and on heaths and chalky banks and the borders of fields, and is one of the commonest of our British orchids. The rather slender stem is about a foot in height, and the rosy-purple flowers are produced in a rather dense spike from June to August. *G. albida* is found in pastures in hilly districts, and has a stem from six to nine inches in height, the spikes of small greenish-white flowers appearing in June and July.

Of *Habenaria* there are three species: *H. viridis* (the Green Habenaria, or Frog Orchis), found in meadows and hilly pastures in gravelly soil, and producing its greenish flowers in June and July; *H. chlorantha* (the Greater Butterfly Habenaria, or Orchis), frequently found in moist meadows and pastures, and sometimes in woods, and having the greenish-white flowers (which are fragrant in the evening, and more particularly so after rain) in a lax spike; and *H. bifolia* (the Smaller Butterfly Orchis), which is found most commonly on heaths, and has smaller flowers than *H. chlorantha*.

Finally, of the two genera which were mostly dwelt on in the article to which reference has been already made, viz., *Orchis* and *Ophrys*, there are several species which flower in May, June, and July, as, for example, *Orchis pyramidalis*, *O. hircina* (the Lizard Orchis), *O. ustulata*, *O. laxiflora*, *O. latifolia*, *Ophrys arachnites* (the late Spider Ophrys), and *O. fucifera* (the Drone Ophrys).

D. W.

NATURAL HISTORY ANECDOTES.

A GALLOWAY EAGLE.

SOME years ago I had an opportunity of visiting Kirkeudbrightshire, which, with the neighbouring county of Wigton, forms what is called Galloway, or the Southern Highlands of Scotland. Under the guidance of a farmer's son, an intelligent and active young man, I explored some wild mountain scenery seldom visited by the ordinary tourist. In one lofty spot my friend pointed out to me an eagle's eyrie, or place where the eagle annually built her rest. I was directed to look at a small rocky platform where the parent birds stored the game, fish, and other food procured for their young. It seems that their larder was usually well stocked during the breeding season, and that not a little of the game was *high* in flavour before it was consumed. I inquired how many eaglets were annually hatched at a time, and was told that often there was only one, and never more than two. My friend also added that when there were two young birds they often fought fiercely in the nest, and gave their anxious parents no little trouble. Then he described to me an instance of filial unruliness and parental wisdom, which is perhaps new to those who have studied the history of eagles. I give his

story as nearly as possible in his own words, promising that the whole affair came under his own personal observation:

"One year the eagle had two eaglets, strong young birds, that were unusually fierce and quarrelsome. Their parent, as I often observed, made many fruitless efforts to reduce them to harmony. At last, wearied out with their broils, she caught up one of them in her talons, and carried it away down to a small island in a lake at the foot of the mountain. There she left her rebellious child in a place of safety, 'putting it into a corner,' in the language of the nursery. But she regularly fed both the young birds till they were able to shift for themselves. She flew between the mountain nest where one of them remained, and the island retreat to which the other had been banished, supplying both with food in abundance. A large portion of that food consisted of salmon which she procured by suddenly dashing down upon her prey in the shallower waters of the lake."

J. D.

A BENEVOLENT CAT.

A bachelor friend of mine had a beautiful black tom cat, large in body, sleek and glossy in fur, with a pair of magnificent eyes and luxuriant whiskers to match. The first time I saw him he was stretched on the hearthrug enjoying the fire. Being a lover of cats, and a general favourite with them—by the way, most animals, like children, instinctively know those who love them—I stooped and began to stroke and speak to him, which double operation he seemed to relish considerably. My friend, meantime, was looking on with a sly twinkle in his eye, and sitting in an attitude of expectation, as if sure that something was about to happen. But nothing did happen. I finished my petting, and puss purred his satisfaction. My friend then said, "There must be something peculiar about you; for, do you know, that cat will not allow a stranger to touch him. I was expecting he would resent the liberty you were taking with him; yet, for all that, he is a kind cat. During my absence from home, for example, my servant was taken suddenly unwell, and one day was unable to leave her bed. Most of the day the cat kept her company. Towards evening, however, he disappeared for a time, and on returning leaped on the bed, and lay on the pillow, as close to her mouth as he could, some fish-bones and crusts of bread which he had brought from the kitchen." The cat generally gets credit for doing all the good it does from a purely selfish motive, but surely here was an act of pure benevolence!

A REQUEST FOR HELP.

Recently a sheep-dog made his way into the square in which I live, limping on three legs, and evidently much distressed. He went straight to a person who was cleaning a door-step, and pressing against her dress, sought to attract her attention. Not relishing his advances, she drove him away, and he left with evident reluctance; but seeing a girl a few doors off he made for her and repeated the process of rubbing himself against her. Wondering what the animal wanted, and willing to learn his will, she noticed him holding up his foot, and on examining it found a large pin sticking in it perpendicularly. This she immediately drew out, when, looking up in her face and wagging his tail, saying "Thank you" as plainly as a dog can say, he bounded off like an arrow, I suppose to try and find his master.

POMPEY, OF Salford.

"Pompey is mad! They are going to poison him! Pompey is dead!" Such were the exclamations which followed each other in rapid succession among the juveniles in a certain locality of Salford one morning in the month of May last. But who was Pompey? The well-known Salford "fire-engine dog." Pompey respected himself; never forgot either the important position he occupied or the onerous duties he had to discharge; took his walks with a quiet aristocratic dignity that was very impressive, or lay sunning himself on the footpath, turning up his fine nut-brown eye to the various pedestrians as they passed; or, when the fire-bell rang, displayed all the energy, at any rate, of his nature, the agility of his limbs, and the harmony of his voice; he was admired, respected, and, in the last case, generally avoided by all. With the children he was an object of much interest, on good terms with most, but permitting undue familiarities on the part of none.

After his untimely end by poison, I gleaned from his latest master some particulars of his life. He was eight years old—a cross between a retriever and a Newfoundland. His first master was a private in the 1st Royal Dragoons, and Pompey was a useful member of the corps. When the men were at drill he was constantly in attendance, keeping as sharp an eye upon them as the drill-sergeant himself. If any of them dropped anything, such as a glove, he picked it up, kept it till drill was over, and then surrendered all to his master—he would not to any one else—and stood by while every man claimed his own.

On leaving the army his master joined the Salford police force, and was attached to the fire brigade. His dog came along with him, and soon got *au fait* in all the self-imposed duties of his new situation. When his master was on duty, Pompey was by his side, or close at hand, whether by day or night. When the fire-bell rang he was on his feet in earnest, scouring the streets where the firemen lived, barking with all his might. Then, as the crowd collected to see the engine leave the station, by dint of running backward and forward and furious barking, he kept a clear space in front of the gate. As soon as all was ready for a start, taking his place before the horses, he dashed off at full speed, and led, as if by some instinct, in the straightest direction to the fire. After a time he became too fat to run, then he jumped upon the engine, and, taking his place in front, sat barking all the way.

He would go to one or other of several shops—one of them a considerable distance off—according to instructions, and fetch his food, carrying a penny or several pence in his mouth; but he always took care to see the food laid down before he gave up the money. Having made the exchange, he trotted back to his master, eating nothing till leave had been given.

He was most obedient to his master, but regarded the orders of no one else. One day a boy of mine on his way to school had some fun with the dog; when getting tired of his gambols, and the rather ominous width of his mouth, the boy bolted off. The order was given to fetch the boy back. There was no use resisting, and the captor quietly led his captive back to his master.

On one occasion he was stolen by some expert in the dog-stealing profession, and, as it turned out on inquiry, had been taken to Liverpool. In a few days, however, he returned all right, it being conjectured

that he had travelled by rail, as he was seen to leave a Liverpool train at the Manchester Victoria Station, it being further conjectured that he had violated the company's regulations on the occasion, there being no authentic record of his having taken out a ticket before starting.

His master died rather suddenly, and it was touching to see the melancholy aspect of the dog and hear his piteous howling. On the day of the funeral he walked sedately behind the hearse, between two of the firemen, his dog-heart evidently full of real sorrow.

The friends of the deceased man took the dog by rail to Wolverhampton, seventy-four miles from Manchester. At the end of about a month he reappeared at the fire-station in Salford, greatly exhausted, his feet and legs swollen and very sore. Evidently he had made the journey on foot. By dint of bathing and careful nursing on the part of one of the firemen, to whom he showed special attachment, he speedily recovered, and resumed his wonted habits, greatly to the satisfaction of all his old friends.

But the end of his interesting history was near. His new master left for his holiday, and the dog became disconsolate. He ran along the streets barking, or sat and howled in evident distress. The cry was raised, "He is mad!" and a mad dog in crowded streets is far from being desirable; so the civic executioner of the law against mad dogs was called, and a dose of prussic acid ended the career of Pompey. "I don't believe, sir," said his master, with a slight shake in his voice—"I don't believe he was mad; they thought he was, but he was only fretting. Had I thought he would fret, I would have taken him with me, or had they sent me word that he was fretting, I would have come to him." It was well spoken.

A SPIDER-KILLING FLY.

An interesting specimen has been obtained (says the Dunedin "Evening Star") from the North Island. It is the nest of the spider-killing fly, and is an example of how the balance is preserved by nature. The nest in question consists of a series of cells made of clay in the neatest manner, and in each cell is imprisoned a good fat spider. The cells are built in the corners of outhouses, and even in houses which are inhabited, and persons resident in the district where these flies abound say that if a coat or article of dress is left hanging up for some time, you may find a row of cells built in some of the folds. It is, we are informed, a most interesting sight to watch the clever little builder manipulating with its mouth (to use a bull) the clay and building the cell in which to immure the unfortunate spider. The fly's object is not the extermination of the great enemy of fly kind, but merely to provide food for its own larvae. In each cell is deposited an egg as well as a spider, and when the grub is hatched the youngster lives on the prisoner. The parent fly is knowing enough not to kill the spider, but walls him up alive, a proceeding which of itself would not inconvenience him for a long time, as spiders are capable of living for long periods without food, but doubtless his spidership is a little inconvenienced when the young grub begins to devour him, especially as in all probability the grub imitates the larvae of the ichneumon flies, which live in many caterpillars, and abstain from touching any of the vital parts till ready to change into the pupa state, so that it may have a supply of fresh

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provision to the last. A strange thing about these flies is that they have only appeared within the last few years. We believe a fly of similar habits is found in Brazil, but do not know whether he devotes his attention solely to spiders or not.

THE ARDENNES.

THE Neur Paï (bleak country), as that district known as the Ardennes is called in Walloon dialect, is well worthy the attention which writers both in this country and abroad have, in the interests of tourists, recently endeavoured to secure for it. All that has been said of the mingled attractions and advantages it offers the holiday-maker in search at once of health and instruction is correct. It is easy of attainment, a day's journey, either *via* Antwerp or Ostend, sufficing to place him on its borders; the atmosphere is salubrious, although, perhaps, more adapted for constitutions which require bracing than for those demanding warmth and soft breezes; living, lodging, and means of locomotion are all reasonable, the first being wholesome and ample, the second cleanly and comfortable, and the last offering a perfect system or network of communication throughout the country, by means of branch lines and *malle-poste* service. Travellers and writers in all times have been eloquent on the subject of the varied scenery and striking natural features of the Ardennes. Petrarch speaks of his journey through this region in 1333 in enthusiastic terms. It is a mistake, however, either to compare the country itself with Switzerland, or its principal river, the Meuse, with the Rhine, as is sometimes done. The varied and striking nature of its scenery, however, is beyond dispute; and the fact of the immediate neighbourhood to each other of features and scenes of the most opposite description, makes this, perhaps, more apparent and more remarkable. In close proximity here we have mining, manufacturing, and agricultural districts: the two first with their characteristics of busy life, noise, and crowded population; the last wearing that peaceful aspect supposed to belong to agriculture ever since the world began.

For the information of those to whom it may be unknown ground, it may be stated that the Ardennes at this date is understood to be a tract of country stretching from the Sambre to the Moselle, and comprising portions of Belgium proper, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Northern France, and Rhenish Prussia. The name is familiarly associated with the march from Brussels to Waterloo by the famous stanza of Lord Byron's "Childe Harold," beginning,—

" And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's teardrops."

In its greatest length it measures 160 miles. On its borders, and forming a species of irregular circle round it, it has the famous cities or towns of Liége, Spa, Trèves, Thionville, Sédan, and Namur; a little within this imaginary circle, Luxembourg (capital of Dutch Luxembourg), Arlon (capital of Belgian Luxembourg), and the charming towns of Givet, Dinant, and Huy: the first French, the last two Belgian, and all three situated on the Meuse. Liége is, on the whole, the Englishman's best starting-point for visiting the

Ardennes, whether his intention be to make direct for some sportsman's haunt in the Grand Duchy, some angler's station on the Meuse or Ourthe (the latter is a fine trout stream), or, in the character of intelligent and interested explorer, to visit the country generally, availing himself of the railways for following the beaten tracks, and exerting his powers of pedestrianism for visiting the unbeaten ones. The *routes de travers* and *sentiers de piéton* (cross-cuts and footpaths) form a famous feature in pedestrianism in the Ardennes, as they nearly invariably lead to points of view wholly unattainable by other means of locomotion, and generally excelling in beauty or curiosity of feature. The Walloon dialect and dialects of German are spoken nearly throughout the country, but a fair knowledge of French and German will enable the visitor to understand and make himself understood everywhere in it, and, it should be added, is very nearly indispensable to his thorough enjoyment in the country, as without it he can scarcely hope to acquire accurate knowledge of Ardennais character, customs, and the local interests of various descriptions offered his observation everywhere here, and all which are worthy his attention. The scenery of French Ardennes is considered by some to be the most romantic in character, that of the Grand Duchy the most imposing, whilst that along the course of the Meuse from Liége to Givet undoubtedly is the most varied. There is a spring season in the Ardennes, but holiday-makers generally should select early autumn as their time for visiting the country; and it should be emphatically impressed on all intending visitors that it is not the tourist in a hurry to see as much as possible within the shortest possible space of time who will either enjoy or profit by a visit to the Ardennes. The visitor hurrying through this region will probably note its leading characteristics: its alternate wooded, ruin-crowned, and bleak heights; its busy towns and quiet hamlets; dense forests of beech and oak; rapid rivers, and streamlets that the sun never reaches; smiling open glades; narrowed vistas of gloomy, almost savage-looking scenery, and anon panoramic views of apparently boundless extent and almost ideal beauty. He will, too, possibly discern that he is passing over a field rich in evidences of the various conquerors or occupants of the soil, who have at different times passed over or possessed it, from a date anterior to the time of Cæsar down to the present; that the attractions it possesses for anglers, sportsmen, archeologists, artists, poets even, are of no ordinary description. The tourist, however, who will really most profit by a visit to this country is the leisurely traveller—the pedestrian, able in turn to make use of gun, fishing-rod, sketch-book, and note-book.

The peasant of the Ardennes offers in himself an interesting study. Physically, the veritable Ardennais is a man of medium height, slight muscular build, and bronzed, shrewd countenance. Except to the discerning in such matters, his appearance in no way conveys an idea of the strength, hardiness, and power of endurance for which in reality he is remarkable. In manner he presents a singular mixture of simplicity and independence. None more readily than the Ardennais understands manner, and none more readily responds to manner by manner. Eager to learn, acquiring readily, and retaining what he learns, this hardy, frugal mountaineer is in intelligence considerably above the intellectual average of labourers in the mining and manufacturing districts; and yet

herein a singular anomaly is presented—the peasant of the Ardennes is strictly conservative in practice, but he is a liberal in theory. He takes an interest in, understands, and discourses intelligently with you upon any recent improvements relating to agricultural matters, and, in his mode of cultivating his native soil, does so at this hour after the method and according to the customs observed in the time of Charlemagne.

It may be that the ancient forestry is that most adapted for the soil, but opinions are at least divided on the subject. Amongst other features of "sartage" (*essartage*, disforestation, clearing) here, said to have prevailed since the ninth century, is that of consuming by fire, on the land itself, the *débris* of the recent felling—underwood, weeds, grass, etc. The operation is performed in two ways—*à feu courant* and *à feu couvert*. The first is employed in clearing sloping ground, the second in cleansing marshy or watery plateau land, where herbage of obstinate growth abounds. In the former, the *débris* is spread uniformly over the ground and then set on fire. The effect is startling to the traveller if he chances to be ignorant of its real meaning, as he is likely to imagine that a portion of the forest is in flames. In the operation *à feu couvert*, the rank herbage is hoed up in *plaques* (slabs of regular dimensions), dried, burnt in heaps, and the ashes afterwards strewn uniformly over the ground. The first process described is practised where young shoots are intended to supply the place of the parent trunks recently felled, and is said to give extraordinary impetus to the growth of these. The hoe plays a prominent part in the forest agriculture. A woodcutter's encampment is a curious and picturesque feature of felling in the Ardennes, with its group of conical-shaped extemporised dwellings, miniature windmill dominating these, and rudely-constructed cross erected near. In no part of the world, perhaps, is this emblem of Christianity more frequently met with than here. The greater number, however, mark the spot where a stranger or native has perished in some one or other of the numerous and appalling thunderstorms by which this region is visited. In such dread of these phenomena of nature are the inhabitants, that it is not unusual, on the first approach of a tempest, to see an entire body of labourers in a field throw themselves down on the ground, face downwards, and in that position await its termination. Similarly, a body of woodcutters in a clearing will rush out into the open, and there in like manner await the conclusion of the storm. So great is the volume of water at times discharged in these storms, that streams are often by them converted into torrents in the course of a single hour. Charcoal, for the use of the local foundries, and bark, for tanning, are the principal products obtained from the oak forests of the Ardennes. The barking season (*la péleine*, *la pollerie*) here holds the place that the hop season does with us, and the period of vintage in vine-growing countries. Labour and products generally are well paid throughout the Ardennes, but at that season all other tools are abandoned for the barking-knife. No previous knowledge of the operation is needful, and men, women, and children are eligible for participation in it. Young couples proposing to start together in life often await the close of the barking season, with its certain and ample profits, for so doing. "*All' péleine*," say they to each other and their friends.

Grain crops are only grown to a limited extent

here; both home and foreign markets, however, are largely supplied with beef and mutton from the Ardennes. The latter particularly is of fine quality and flavour. The Ardennais herdsman's care of his cattle is proverbial, and is the subject of many of the picturesque traditions popular in the basin of the Meuse. His pride in the condition of his animals, indeed, may be said to resemble that of a mechanic in the excellence of his work, or a tradesman in the quality of his wares. The cattle of an entire commune is generally under the charge of a single herdsman; the office is therefore no slight one to fulfil. The departure at dawn of the cows and other animals of an entire village for pasture, and their return to shed at eve, is one of the curious features of rural life in the Ardennes. The herdsman summons them by sound of trumpet, and its meaning seems to be as well understood by the animals themselves as by the blower, for almost before the conclusion of the first flourish (if the discordant sound produced on the rough instrument employed in this service can be designated by that name) the cows, pigs, etc., of every dwelling are seen emerging from their sheds, the steadier animals of themselves beginning to take the well-known road leading to pasture. Scarcely less discordant in sound, it may be added, are the verbal utterances and cries by which also the task of driving his herd a-field is accomplished by the herdsman. The Ardennes is also famous for a race of ponies said to have been equally prized in Cæsar's time, who refers to them in his "Commentaries." It should be borne in mind that the *Silva Arduenna* of classical times represented a much larger tract of ancient Gaul than it does at the present date. In those times it stretched from the Rhine to the Scheldt. The name is assumed to have been derived from an indigenous Gallo-Belgic deity called Ardvina. Ardvina was goddess of forests. The Ardennes of to-day, also, by no means conveys an idea of the *Silva Arduenna* of Cæsar's time. Then its dense forests were the abode of savage animals and noxious reptiles of various descriptions. At the present time its woods hold nothing more formidable than wild boar, and the wild boar *chasses* here, public or special, are often shared in by the English sportsman in the Ardennes.

The monks were the first clearers and fertilisers of the soil. Grants of portions of the land were constantly made by early Frankish Christian sovereigns to bodies of monks on condition that they should clear and cultivate it. By a grant, date about A.D. 562, Sigebert, King of Austrasia (sometimes styled King of Metz simply), accords to some religious order twelve "measures" of ground, *in foreste nostrâ nuncupata Arduenna, in locis vastae solitudinis in quibus caterva bestiarum germinat*. In this way rose the famous abbeys of Stavelot and Malmedy and many others.

The history of the Ardennes is closely connected with that of early Christianity. Traces of its rise, spread, and early vicissitudes are constantly presented us here, in the traditions of which its caverns are the subjects, in names, or in the more tangible form of ecclesiastical remnants, dating from the earliest known time of the erection of such, and in the antiquity of the sees of Tongres and Trèves. In the "age of persecution" the numerous caverns found in the lime rocks of this region served as places of concealment for the proscribed members of the condemned creed. It is related in the history of one

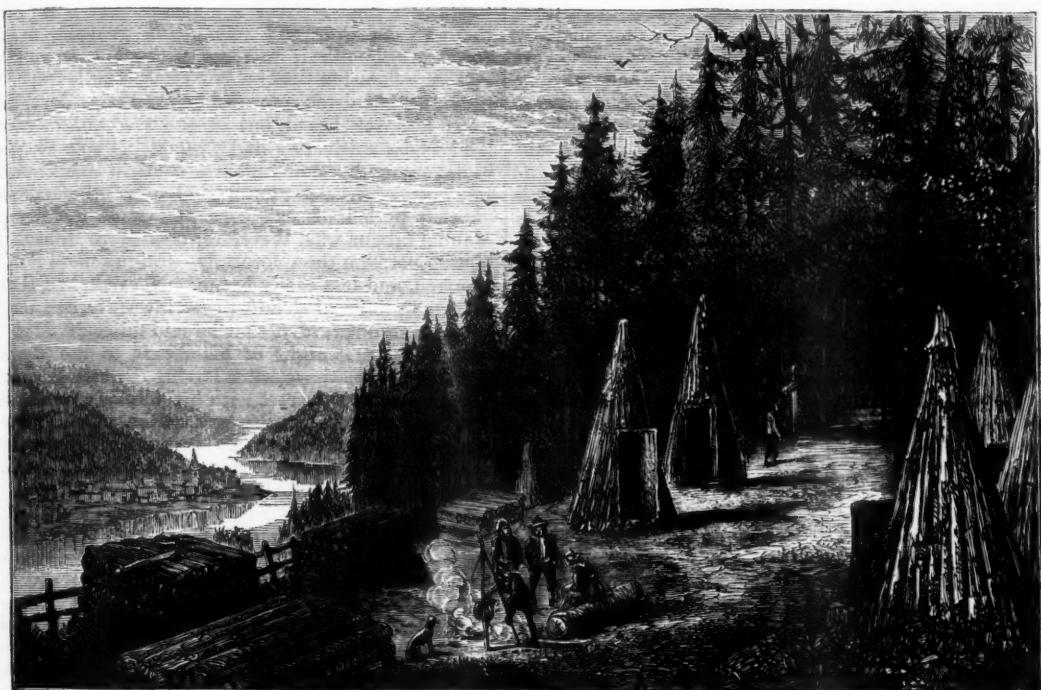
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of the Roman proconsuls that in his time a young Christian child was martyred for refusing to betray the hiding-place in one of these caverns of some condemned members of the faith. It should be a subject of rejoicing with us, even at this distant date, to reflect that the names of English and Scotch missionaries figure in the list preserved of early evangelisers who carried the light of the gospel into this quarter of heathen Gaul and the countries beyond. "They rarely returned to report their success, but their labours were indeed proclaimed by their fruits." Ireland, too, sent out her evangelisers to this part. An imposing mass of rock known as the Rochers de

lightenment generally, marking the age in which we live. The most popular order of tradition prevailing in the Ardennes are those connected with the *Nutons*, the supposed inhabitants of the caverns of this region. There is written proof that the superstition flourished in the basin of the Meuse a thousand years since; and according to tradition it has done so almost from the date which ushered in the Christian era. The originals of the Nutons were beyond doubt the Christian fugitives who, in various seasons of persecution in the early church, sought shelter in the caverns. The attributes ascribed to the Nuton all point to this conclusion. Rectitude in thought and



WOODCUTTERS' CAMP.

Frègne, situated on the banks of the Meuse between Namur and Dinant, contains two caverns. The one is said to have been the place of worship, the other the hiding-place, of a band of early Christian missionaries. The first, which in form bears some resemblance to a church, and may possibly owe its designation, "Grande Eglise," to this circumstance, is also stated to have been the resting-place during a century of a Scotch missionary, massacred here about the year 655.

A love of romantic and fantastic tradition is a deeply-rooted element in Ardennais character. Not one amongst its countless feudal ruins, not a monastic remnant, not a crag, not a streamlet scarcely, not a town, not a hamlet even in the Ardennes, that has not its special tradition attached to it. It should be observed, however, that, whilst the love of these remains, the credulity, the superstitious feeling with which they were formerly regarded, is dying out before the rapid advance of intelligence and en-

deed, the dignity of labour, the excellence of resignation under reverses, of perseverance and patience under difficulties, of steadfastness in all worldly purpose, in short, are the teachings invariably inculcated in the traditions relating to him. Superstition has, however, invested the Nuton with the following attributes, physical and otherwise. He is half elf half mortal in nature; brown-skinned, ill-favoured, dwarfish in stature, but of unerring benevolence of aspect. He is endowed with every Christian quality, and is a skilled workman in every species of handicraft; a skilled labourer also in all manual callings. Lastly, his special mission on earth is to help the deserving amongst mankind, and to punish the undeserving; but he is perhaps more particularly the foe of the dishonest and the idle. He holds in special abhorrence the servant who lies in bed after cock-crow; the herdsman who conducts his cattle afield after sunrise; the labourer who, having fallen asleep under the hedge at noonday, presents himself to re-

ceive a full day's pay in the evening, etc. The race is designated variously Nutons, Lutons, Sotais, Massotais, in the Walloon-speaking provinces; Wichtelschen (diminutive of Wichtel, spirit), Vichtelschen, Tüten, Teuten, in the German. "*Trou des Nutons*" (*Nuton*, cave, or cavern) in the former becomes "Wichtelsloch," "Vichtelsloch" in the latter. *Nuton* is derived from *nutte*, "night," in Walloon. The applicability of the name and derivation are obvious in this instance, as the tasks taken upon himself by the Nuton, of whatsoever nature, are represented as being invariably accomplished during the night season. Proof again of the human fugitive having been the original of the Nuton. The Ardennais peasants relates that it was the custom with his forefathers, under stress of labour, to place work—agricultural implements to mend or make, etc.—accompanied by offerings of food, at the mouths of the caverns overnight, and that it was always found done and awaiting them on the same spot next morning. It is almost needless to say that, like all similar superstitions, that connected with the Nutons assumes, here and there, the most exaggerated proportions. For instance, in parts he is represented as being only a span in height, and yet as undertaking and performing tasks that it would be possible only for a giant in strength and stature to accomplish; the above, however, is the description more generally prevailing, and wherever this is so, the traditions related concerning him partake of the same moderate colouring. The following tradition, one of hundreds similar, is a fair specimen of the more simple of these Nuton legends. It is popular in the neighbourhood of Strassen, a village situated on the old Roman road between Arlon and Luxembourg.

Many generations since (says the tradition), there dwelt an honest farmer, one Wilhelm, and his family, at Strassen. Piety, an unwavering rectitude, industry, and charity, were the guiding principles and virtues of that household. Early in the morning the voices of master and dependents were lifted together in praise of the Creator; together they laboured in the field throughout the day, and again in the evening returned thanks to God in unison for the blessings they enjoyed in the possession of life—the Lord's first great gift to us—and the tranquil pleasures which a frugal, industrious existence secured them. Nowhere was the maxim, "Waste not, want not," better understood than here; but never, either, was the houseless wanderer, the sick, or the hungry turned away unaided from the doors. The farmer had commenced life as a poor man, with a few acres of indifferent land only for his patrimony. In middle age he had, through his own exertions, become a rich one. The acquisition of wealth, however, in no way altered him—simplicity, piety, and charity still marked all his habits and feelings.

Wilhelm had been tried by the test of prosperity, and had not been found wanting. Presently he was to be tried by that of adversity.

"When reverse once knocks at the door of prosperity," says the proverb, "it is generally found standing there more than once again after." It proved so with the farmer of Strassen. Stroke upon stroke of ill-luck fell upon the once-flourishing household. Hail and frost destroyed his crops, lightning set his granaries on fire, disease decimated his cattle. Disaster followed on disaster, in short, in such quick succession, that he found it impossible even partially

to retrieve misfortune by redoubled exertion in the field or retrenchment at home, or, indeed, to avert for a single season the catastrophe of ruin which eventually and completely overtook him. There came the hour when he saw himself obliged to dismiss the last of the faithful adherents and labourers who had for long years formed part of his household. There came the moment when, bidding farewell to the roomy farmhouse, he found himself called upon—accompanied now by wife and children—to take up his residence once again in the humble cottage in which the earlier years of his life had been passed; and there, dependent on his own exertions alone, and the feeble aid of his two eldest boys—lads of twelve and fourteen years of age only respectively—begin life anew. Not a murmur, not a repining thought, however, did misfortune provoke in the farmer, although it was not without keen anxiety and apprehension that he saw himself called upon to provide a subsistence for the beloved ones dependent upon him for bread, out of the few poor acres of land whose cultivation had formed his sole resource in days gone by, and which now again composed his sole possessions. He had fully reached the mid-term of that period of existence known as middle-age. Manual labour was, therefore, now more difficult to him to perform than formerly—fatigue more readily incurred, and less easily borne. Nevertheless, it was with undiminished steadfastness inwardly, and cheerful bearing outwardly, that he laid himself down to rest on the first night of his return to the humble home of former times, after having dismissed his two eldest boys to their rest with his blessing and an injunction to "rise with the lark on the morrow," as on that day they must begin to prove themselves men, by aiding him to prepare their little field for the reception of grain, seedtime being at hand.

* * * * *

There were busy sounds without that night, when the last glimmer of light had disappeared within the farmer's dwelling, and silence proclaimed that the household were wrapped in slumber. Dusky figures, faintly visible in the partial light of a waning moon, moved rapidly to and fro, and busy hands toiled laboriously throughout the night hours about the farmer's land. Neither sights nor sounds, however, reached the senses of the farmer, who slept the sound sleep which is generally the portion of the clear in conscience and frugal in habit; but, on the following morning, when he awoke, he beheld, to his astonishment, his field in perfect condition—prepared and sown! The work he had believed would cost him a fortnight at least of laborious toil was done—had been completed in a single night!

Wilhelm's astonishment subsided in a few moments, however. He knew the Nutons had come to his assistance, and gratitude filled his heart, for he also knew that where these beneficent beings once showed favour they were not slow to do so again, unless their services appeared to beget a habit of lazy security on the part of those they desired to serve, or otherwise to provoke an improper return. He saw the bread of his little ones secured in the future, and the reflection caused a feeling of peace to descend upon him of a nature to which he had for many months past been a stranger. The claims of his benefactors to more tangible recognition of their services on his part were not forgotten, however, in the absorbing sensation of relief and gratitude which filled him, and that night a magnificent loaf of fine wheaten

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flour was conveyed by himself and sons to the mouth of the neighbouring "Wichtelsloch," accompanied by that greatly-prized delicacy amongst the Nutons of all ages, a *galette* (cake—in this instance of a savoury nature), steeped in salted vinegar. The *galette* rivalled the loaf in weight and dimensions.

There is little more to be told that the reader will not surmise. The Nutons completed the work they had taken in hand, which was evidently that of aiding the farmer to recover the comfortable position and possessions he had lost. Seedtime and harvest, during the succeeding four or five years, invariably brought them to his assistance. At the end of that time all his land had been bought back, his stock replaced, the old servitors again gathered round him, and he and his once more installed in the comfortable home in which it had been his hope that his own closing years, and those of many generations after him, might be spent.

The hope was fulfilled. There came a time, however, when the last of his race was laid in the grave, and the house and lands passed into the possession of strangers. At the present date no trace exists to mark the spot where Farmer Wilhelm's home stood. Every vestige of it has long since disappeared, but, like the record of the pious family who were its original occupants, the fact of its sometime existence, long, long years ago, survives in the pages of tradition.

READING AND SPELLING.

NOT very long ago, when rusticating in a northern county, I fell in with a friend who had brought her little girl out for a holiday. The child, who was just six years old, was amusing herself with a book. I took her on my knee and asked her to show me the pictures. "Shall I read a pretty story?" she said. "Certainly, if you like, my dear." She began to read, and read with such ease and propriety that I was astonished. Thinking, however, that she might by frequent reading have learned the story by heart, I drew a book from my pocket, a work of Longfellow's, and requested her to read me some of that. She read it as fluently and intelligently as she had done the story-book; and then she bounded off to play with a new companion whose acquaintance she had lately made. When she was out of hearing, I asked my lady friend how she had managed to teach her little girl to read so admirably. "I am frequently asked that question," she replied, "and I tell inquirers that the child reads well because she does not know her letters. It is my opinion that if you want to make a child dislike and dread a book, you should begin by teaching it the letters of the alphabet. Polly never learned them, and perhaps does not know the names of them to this day; but you see she reads as well as most children read at twice her age. She learned to like books from hearing pleasant stories and simple verses read, and of course wished to be able to read them herself. We began by reading together a simple tale written in words of one and two syllables. She soon picked up a little stock of words, and I think must have learned a hundred at least in less time than children of her age take to learn the letters of the alphabet."

"How do you account for that?"

"I hardly know, unless it be that a word having more recognisable features, so to speak, than a letter, and having a meaning, which a letter has not, makes a much stronger impression on the memory."

"What books has she read mostly?"

"Children's books in prose and verse, hymns a good many, and the New Testament."

"But she read whole pages in Longfellow's 'Hyperion,' and read correctly many words which she could never have met with in the books you mention."

"Very true, many words, as you say, which she never saw before, but not many syllables, I suspect not any. I was surprised myself when I found her reading rightly words she had never seen before. But that explained itself on a little reflection. If you open a dictionary and look down the long columns you may be a little surprised yourself to find that, numerous as are the words in a language, the syllables are comparatively few, nearly all of them coming into use in different words, now in the beginning, now in the middle, and now in the end, over and over and over again."

"But the syllables are not separated in print; how can she distinguish them in words new to her?"

"You see she does distinguish them; the fact is sufficient for me."

"But that fact—should it not tell more strongly in favour of learning the letters?"

"I think not. Letters to a child are a kind of mystery—mere arbitrary signs, and have no meaning attached to them."

"May I ask you what was your reason for adopting this plan?"

"Well, I cannot boast of originating it. I did but follow the example of others. I had seen the plan succeed with other children, for that reason I adopted it in teaching my own child. The efficacy of the plan has been repeatedly proved, and it may possibly come to be generally followed."

I have cited the above anecdote by way of introduction to a few brief remarks on the subject of teaching children to read and to spell, concerning which so much discussion has been going on of late, and such various opinions have been expressed. A rather violent outcry has been raised against the alleged absurdity of English spelling, and some very forcible pleas have certainly been made in favour of the phonetic system. No such outcry, however, so far as I am aware, has ever been made against the spelling of the French tongue, which so many Englishmen and Englishwomen learn both to read and to write correctly. The French spelling should be at least as puzzling to a learner, whether a native or a foreigner, as the English. As an instance, mark how many different combinations go to express a single sound. The word *est* (is) is pronounced by a Frenchman as the letter *a* in the English word "day," and in precisely the same manner are pronounced all the following words and terminations: *es, et, er, é, ée, ai, aie, aís, ois, oit, eit, ait, oient, aient*, while in a crowd of instances *es* in prose has no sound at all. We have certainly nothing like that in English. But this by way of parenthesis.

The objections urged against the phonetic system are—first, the hindrance it would cast in the way of the study of etymology, of which more is made than we think there is occasion for. The Italian language is almost entirely phonetically written, but every reader

of Italian must have been struck by the clearness with which the derivation of words (as *poco*, *filosofo*) asserts itself, as it were, through the very transparent disguise of the modern spelling. As much may be said for the Spanish tongue, in which the Roman origin of the words finds recognition in every sentence. It may be objected that these Peninsular dialects are the manifest offspring of the Latin, and that therefore the ground they afford for etymological inquiry is but limited. True, but if the changes they have undergone in the course of centuries have not eclipsed their etymology, why should the English tongue, albeit with more various derivation, suffer eclipse? A more weighty objection, it appears to me, is the revolution the phonetic system would introduce in the art of printing and the production of general literature. It is purely hopeless to expect that printers will not only educate themselves anew, but confiscate their existing types and other materials at an expense which would be absolutely ruinous to the majority of them. A third objection, and the most important one, in the opinion of many, is based on the assumed addition to the labours of the infant beginner, who would have nearly double the number of arbitrary characters to deal with, and would necessarily occupy a much longer time in becoming acquainted with them.

The first objection is of no great weight, as I have already hinted, seeing that the utmost effect of phonetics on etymology would be to make the study of it a little more difficult, but not a whit less interesting—rather the more so. Further, there will always be dictionaries in existence showing the prephonetic spelling, to which reference can easily be made.

The second objection is of more force, indeed is practically almost overwhelming, if, as we may assume, it is intended that in all printed books and sheets the twenty-six letters of the present alphabet are to be cashiered to make room for the thirty-eight of Mr. Pitman or the forty-two of Mr. Ellis. Such a change, if it take place at all, must be effected at once, for a gradual change would be more perplexing to printers, and more expensive in the long run, than a sudden one. It seems pretty plain that so complete a revolution is out of the question for some years to come at least, and that it will only be effected, if at all, by a generation which shall have become converted to phonetic principles.

This conversion, it is confidently intimated, will take place; and it is the confident assertion of those who hold this opinion that supplies the answer to the third objection. They contend that a child who is taught to read by the phonetic system learns to read as quickly and as well in books printed in the ordinary character as does the child who knows only the ordinary characters and is ignorant of the phonetic alphabet, while the former gains the immense advantage of getting rid of the perplexing varieties of sound represented, or misrepresented, by certain of the letters of the alphabet in present use. That being the case, say the phoneticians, it will not be absolutely necessary to change existing methods of printing until it shall be quite convenient to do so. In comparatively few years, if phonetics are generally adopted, a generation will have sprung up to whom both the old and new systems will be equally facile. The phonetic system will gradually make its way by its own merits, for it will bring sight and sound, as it were, into harmony; it will finally determine the spelling of all words, as well those in present use as

those to be invented in the future; and it will settle the pronunciation of our language, and of all foreign terms introduced in their works by travellers and scientists.

I confess this is an agreeable prospect enough, and I, for one, have not the slightest objection that attempts be made to realise it as soon as possible. Meanwhile it has to be proved, I think, that children of ordinary capacity can master the phonetic characters as rapidly as they are averred to be capable of doing. *Fiat experimentum*, by all means, and let the world know the result. In the interim, I may recommend to all whom it may concern—and they are a rather large family—the example of the lady who has spoken above, reminding them, however, that in teaching children to read without spelling, they must be willing to pay at least as much attention to the lessons as they demand from their pupils; for this process is emphatically a business of teaching, not of ordering to learn.

But as spelling will have to be learned for some very considerable time before phonetics become the rule, and as there is dreary evidence far too abounding that boys and young men who ought to spell well spell very badly, I may be allowed to say a word on this subject. Why is it that of 125 candidates who are plucked on examination for the civil service, more than 100 are plucked for bad spelling? And why is it that these unfortunates are not at all singular in their failures? The reason is, that they never did set about learning to spell in the right way. There is hardly anything more certain than success in learning to spell if one goes the right way to work. Look at this fact: boys and lads who can scarcely spell at all are often bound apprentices to printers, and begin work as compositors, and in the course of a few weeks or months they spell almost every word correctly. Why is it so? Simply because they are all day long spelling by hand, and not by the eye or the ear alone, as they pick up the types with their fingers. The hand is a far better remembrancer—twenty times better—than either the eye or the ear, or both. Let him, then, who wants to spell correctly write frequently from printed copies, correcting every line by his copy as he proceeds. He will find, in a reasonable time, that he can spell well even words he may never have written. The plan pursued in ordinary schools is sadly wasteful of time. The pupil is set to write a copy of a single line, and thus he learns to spell, perhaps, half-a-dozen words while he might have learned fifty by writing a long paragraph instead of a line over and over. Children, I am decidedly of opinion, should begin writing almost as soon as they begin reading, and should be taught as early as may be to write the lessons they have read. If the two processes of learning to read and learning to write were carried on together there would be few boys or girls who, on leaving school at fourteen or fifteen, would be unable to spell their own language correctly.

A FALSE ALARM.

A RECOLLECTION OF INDIAN FRONTIER DUTY.

MY good friends G. and K. will pardon me, I hope, for narrating a little episode of our frontier life while serving together with the dear old Guide Corps. That gallant corps, recently honoured with the addition of "Her Majesty's Royal" to its

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well-known, well-feared, well-loved name, was then in the heyday of its youth, strength, and fighting powers. It numbered in those days over six hundred foot soldiers—each company consisting mainly of a different Indian race—and 300 horsemen of various sorts. Many of these soldiers were recruited from the daring lawless men who, in the years of Sikh misrule in Peshawur, defied the law, hated the lawgivers, and loved to live by plunder. “*Fortuna favet fortibus*” was a saying very applicable in one sense to them, for it was by rare good fortune that some of them had escaped the sword, the jail, the cord, all of which had often pursued, and sometimes had very nearly overtaken, them. Wearing the uniform of the Guides, they were now safe from personal enemies who burned to be revenged on them; and the former Government having collapsed, old charges had perished in the ruin of the Sikh dynasty.

At the time I speak of the corps was told off to keep the peace in the Ensufzai district, which was then about the most lawless on the north-west frontier of India. It was told also to watch the tribes of the neighbouring hills and Sitana fanatics, who crowded up to that frontier from India to disturb the English infidels when there was a chance. There were also across the border many fugitives from English justice, who found then, and still find, an asylum there, and are ever ready to join in raids upon our villages near the foot of the hills.

One of these fugitives, Adjoon Khan, who was a chief in one of our villages, had cruelly murdered a native revenue officer, and rode across the frontier to avoid the gallows. Knowing the country well, and having many relations and secret friends among our villagers, he frequently made incursions into the Ensufzai, and recruited his fortunes by plundering Hindoo merchants who were unlucky enough to fall in his way.

One day news came to our fort, Murdan, that Adjoon was preparing his followers for a big raid on one of our larger villages, but no particular one was named. At that time Captain G., a young officer, was in temporary command of the Guides, and Ensign K. was acting-adjutant. On receiving a report of the coming raid, Captain G. wrote to the commissioner of the district, the well-known and loved Sir Herbert Edwardes, for orders as to how he would wish him to act. The laconic answer, “Repel and expel,” came back at once, set in a warm, kindly letter, and was well understood by the young soldier.

A few days later, about one o'clock in the morning, he was suddenly aroused by a messenger from the frontier village of Jellala, who said that Adjoon Khan was expected to make a swoop on that village about daybreak, and begged for assistance.

As all three of us lived in the same house, G. put the rest of us up at once, and gave orders for a company of infantry and thirty horsemen to get ready immediately for service. In a very short time we started, moving off as quietly and rapidly as possible. Nothing was said to the men of where we were going, lest any spies of Adjoon's should be about, and hear of our movement on Jellala. We marched along an open plain for some three or four miles, and then arrived at a range of broken ground and hills, the highest of which is called Tucht-i-Bai. There the road runs through a defile, and there the infantry was halted, and left under K.'s command.

It was necessary to move the cavalry on more rapidly, as the day would soon break, and the sooner Jellala was reached the better was the chance of catching Adjoon and his followers. The infantry was to remain in the pass till sent for, which it would be if Adjoon was in force, or could persuade any Jellala sympathisers to join him in a fight.

Headed by G., the cavalry, which the writer accompanied, descended into a large ravine leading to the village, that we might not be seen till nearer our destination. Carefully we went along, and at last, a little after daylight, came to a small level plain near to, and within sight of, Jellala.

The moment we emerged from the ravine we heard a great shout arise from near the village, and from a ravine on our side of it, and evidently from a multitude of people coming towards us.

We could not see them, but G. halted his men and gathered them together in line. He then gave the order, “Forward at a walk,” hoping to meet the enemy immediately they showed on the plateau. Presently the yells seemed to rise from immediately behind the plateau up to the sides of which the men were evidently coming. G. then gave the word “Trot,” to hasten matters and get up the pace for a dash forward.

I could not help looking along the line to see how the men were taking the business, and never saw them look more ready for work. One glance showed they were all right. Their knees were gripping their saddles; their bridles were tight, restraining the eager horses; their bodies were slightly bent forward and their eyes straining to the front. With swords drawn and held straight up they looked for the coming foe, and watched for the last word, “Charge.”

I looked again to the front, and in a few moments saw, with grand surprise, two huge brown wolves leap on to the plateau about a hundred yards to our front. “Halt!” came from G., and a burst of laughter, in which the troopers all joined. The “situation” was explained before we saw one of the fancied enemy. Some forty or fifty young villagers then sprang on to the bank, shouting after the wolves, and calling to us to kill them.

G. and I spurred our willing Arabs in pursuit, but the cunning beasts, recognising their new and more pressing danger, sprang aside with their best mettle towards the ravines again, bounding with long leaps and leaving us behind. A few shots from G.'s revolver followed them, but served only to quicken their pace, and soon they got safe away into broken ground, where our horses could not easily follow them.

We returned to the crowd of men, who had stood watching the chase, and had a friendly talk with them. Adjoon had not come down as was expected, so, after riding into the village and seeing the chiefs, we turned our faces homewards.

When we got back to K., we found the remains of several fires on the roadside, and pieces of the skin of a goat lying about. Some of his men had seen a shepherd with a big he-goat for sale, and brought him to K., who bought the animal and made a present of him to his men. A speedy death and cutting up followed, and with all haste the goat was roasted in small pieces, and eaten up before we got back.

We all started for the fort, and arrived in time for a late breakfast. On the road home K. chaffed us a

little, saying he thought his infantry had been better employed than the cavalry, who had gone forward so fully bent on vigorously "repelling and expelling" our country's foes.

T. F.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S CORONATION.

I WAS at her coronation: and great is the wonder with which I have looked back to the enterprise ever since. I had not the slightest desire to go, but every inclination to stay at home; but it was the only coronation likely to happen in my lifetime, and it was a clear duty to witness it. I was quite aware that it was an occasion (I believe the only one) on which a lady could be alone in public, without impropriety or inconvenience; and I knew of several daughters of peeresses who were going singly to different parts of the Abbey, their tickets being for different places in the building. Tickets were offered me for the two brothers who were then in London; but they were for the nave, and I had the luck of one for the transept-gallery. The streets had hedges of police from our little street to the gates of the Abbey; and none were allowed to pass but the bearers of tickets; so nothing could be safer. I was aware of all this, and had breakfasted, and was at our hall-door in time, when one of my brothers, who would not believe it, would not let me go for another half-hour, while he breakfasted. As I anticipated, the police turned him back, and I missed the front row, where I might have heard and seen everything. Ten minutes sooner I might have succeeded in witnessing what would never happen again in my time. It was a bitter disappointment; but I bent all my strength to see what I could from the back row. Hearing was out of the question, except the loudest of the music. The maids called me at half-past two that June morning, mistaking the clock. I slept no more, and rose at half-past three. As I began to dress, the twenty-one guns were fired, which must have awokened all the sleepers in London. When the maid came to dress me, she said numbers of ladies were already hurrying to the Abbey. I saw the grey old Abbey from my window as I dressed, and thought what would have gone forward within it before the sun set upon it. My mother had laid out her pearl ornaments for me. The feeling was very strange of dressing in crape, blonde, and pearls at four in the morning. Owing to the delay I have referred to, the Poets' Corner entrance was half full when I took my place there. I was glad to see the Somervilles just before me, though we presently parted at the foot of the staircase. On reaching the gallery, I found that a back seat was so far better than a middle one that I should have a pillar to lean against, and a nice corner for my shawl and bag of sandwiches. Two lady-like girls, prettily dressed, sat beside me, and were glad of the use of my copy of the service and programme. The sight of the rapid filling of the Abbey was enough to go for. The stone architecture contrasted finely with the gay colours of the multitude. From my high seat I commanded the whole north transept, the area with the throne, and many portions of galleries, and the balconies, which were called the vaultings. Except a mere sprinkling of oddities, everybody was in full dress. In the whole assemblage I counted six bonnets. The scarlet of the military officers mixed in

well; and the groups of the clergy were dignified; but to an unaccustomed eye the prevalence of court-dresses had a curious effect. I was perpetually taking whole groups of gentlemen for Quakers till I recollect myself. The Earl Marshal's assistants, called Gold Sticks, looked well from above, lightly flitting about in white breeches, silk stockings, blue laced frocks, and white sashes. The throne, an armchair with a round back, covered, as was its footstool, with cloth of gold, stood on an elevation of four steps in the centre of the area. The first peeress took her seat in the north transept opposite at a quarter before seven, and three of the bishops came next. From that time the peers and their ladies arrived faster and faster. Each peeress was conducted by two Gold Sticks, one of whom handed her to her seat, and the other bore and arranged her train on her lap, and saw that her coronet, footstool, and book were comfortably placed. I never saw anywhere so remarkable a contrast between youth and age as in those noble ladies. None of the decent differences of dress which, according to middle-class custom, pertain to contrasting periods of life seem to be admissible on these grand court occasions. Old hags, with their dyed or false hair drawn to the top of their head, to allow the putting on of the coronet, had their necks and arms bare and glittering with diamonds; and those necks and arms were so brown and wrinkled as to make one sick; or dusted over with white powder, which was worse than what it disguised. I saw something of this from my seat in the transept-gallery, but much more when the ceremonial was over, and the peeresses were passing to their carriages, or waiting for them. The younger were as lovely as the aged were haggard. One beautiful creature, with a transcendent complexion and form, and coils upon coils of light hair, was terribly embarrassed about her coronet. She had apparently forgotten that her hair must be disposed with a view to it, and the large braids at the back would in no way permit the coronet to keep on. She and her neighbour tugged vehemently at her braids: and at last the thing was done after a manner, but so as to spoil the wonderful effect of the simultaneous self-coronet of all the peeresses. About nine, the first gleams of the sun slanted into the Abbey, and presently travelled down to the peeresses. I had never before seen the full effect of diamonds. As the light travelled, each peeress shone like a rainbow. The brightness, vastness, and dreamy magnificence of the scene produced a strange effect of exhaustion and sleepiness. About nine o'clock I felt this so disagreeably that I determined to withdraw my senses from the scene, in order to reserve my strength (which was not great at that time) for the ceremonial to come. I had carried a book; and I read and ate a sandwich, leaning against my friendly pillar till I felt refreshed.

The guns told when the Queen had set forth, and there was renewed animation. The Gold Sticks flitted about; there was tuning in the orchestra; and the foreign ambassadors and their suites arrived in quick succession. Prince Esterhazy, crossing a bar of sunshine, was the most prodigious rainbow of all. He was covered with diamonds and pearls; and as he dangled his hat, it cast a dancing radiance all round. While he was thus glittering and gleaming, people were saying, I know not how truly, that he had to redeem those jewels from pawn, as usual, for the occasion. At half-past eleven the guns told that

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the Queen had arrived ; but, as there was much to be done in the robing-room, there was a long pause before she appeared. A burst from the orchestra marked her appearance at the doors, and the anthem, "I was glad," rang through the Abbey. Everybody rose, and the holders of the first and second rows of our gallery stood up so high that I saw nothing of the entrance, nor of the recognition, except the Archbishop of Canterbury reading at one of the angles of the platform. The "God save the Queen" of the organ swelled gloriously forth after the recognition. The services which followed were seen by a very small proportion of those present. The acclamation when the crown was put on her head was very animating, and in the midst of it, in an instant of time, the peeresses were all coroneted, all but the fair creature already described. In order to see the enthroning, I stood on the rail behind our seats, holding by another rail. I was in nobody's way, and I could not resist the temptation, though every moment expecting that the rail would break. Her small dark crown looked pretty, and her mantle of cloth of gold very regal. She herself looked so small as to appear puny. The homage was as pretty a sight as any ; trains of peers touching her crown, and then kissing her hand. It was in the midst of that process that poor Lord Rolle's disaster sent a shock through the whole assemblage. It turned me very sick. The large, infirm old man was held up by two peers, and had nearly reached the royal footstool, when he slipped through the hands of his supporters, and rolled over and over down the steps, lying at the bottom coiled up in his robes. He was instantly lifted up, and he tried again and again, amidst shouts of admiration of his valour. The Queen at length spoke to Lord Melbourne, who stood at her shoulder, and he bowed approval, on which she rose, leaned forward, and held out her hand to the old man, dispensing with his touching the crown. He was not hurt, and his self-quizzing on his misadventure was as brave as his behaviour at the time. A foreigner in London gravely reported to his own countrymen what he entirely believed on the word of a wag, that the Lords Rolle held their title on the condition of performing the feat at every coronation. — *Autobiography of Miss Martineau.*

Sunday Morning.

THE sun, that softer seems on Sabbath days,
Is throwing shadow-trees across the lanes,
And streaming into church by window ways,
And throwing coloured light from pictured panes
Upon the aisle, like psalms that have no tone :
One sunbeam through the roof has found its way,
And shines athwart the row of saints in stone,
And worlds of dust are floating in the ray.

The sun is on the preacher's silv'ry head,
And gives a comfort to his homely words ;
It lights the dim memorials of the dead ;
'Tis in the ivy, too, with twitt'ring birds :
The listless schoolboys, with their sunburnt looks,
Glance round to see the sparrows at the door ;
The elder people keep them to their books,
And poor old folk stare steadfast at the floor.

The organ's prelude to the anthem fills
The shaded church, and stirs the hearts of men,
Until it sinks to whispering, and stills
The trembling walls to silentness again ;
And now a gentle voice is heard alone,
Pleading in saintly strains to ev'ry ear,
And winning ev'ry heart with its rich tone—
A boy's pure treble solo, sweet and clear.

The prayers are ended, and all homeward go
In twos and threes, by many a pleasant way,
Through woodlands where familiar flowers grow,
And fields that in their summer growth are gay :
The simple worship of a little while
Has planted new hopes in the place of cares ;
They know the happiness that brings a smile—
The grace that follows earnest prayer is theirs.

GUY ROSLYN.

Varieties.

HOLME LODGE IN THE FEN COUNTRY.—The page woodcut of Holme Lode in last month's part of the "Leisure Hour" was engraved from an original water-colour drawing, made in the year 1836, by John M. Heathcote, Esq., of Cottenham Castle, Huntingdonshire, who has a considerable property in the fens of that county, and is also an accomplished artist. In his handsome volume, "Fen and Mere" (Longmans), he has preserved, both with pen and pencil, those records of the former state of Whittlesea Mere and its neighbourhood that now possess a peculiar value as an evidence of a condition of things that no longer exist. In his sketch of the Holme Lode, Mr. Heathcote sets before us, in one scene, those many items of a fen subject that made it so very characteristic, and therefore so dear to artists such as De Wint and E. W. Cooke, who in Whittlesea Mere found excellent themes for their pencils. Holme is a considerable village to the south of what was known, in the pre-drainage days, as Whittlesea Mere, the most extensive inland lake that the traveller from London would meet with on his northward journey until he came to Windermere and the Cumberland lakes. As the mere was in the parish of Holme, it ought to have been called Holme Mere, but Whittlesea, on its northern boundary, being the larger town, gave the name. The Great Northern Railway, which is carried over the southernmost portion of the mere, has a station at Holme, with a branch line from thence to Ramsey ; and, therefore, this parish of Holme, with its station midway between Huntingdon and Peterborough, must be familiar to railway travellers. The chief residence in Holme is that of the squire of the parish, William Wells, Esq., of Holme Wood House, who is married to a daughter of the Earl of Wemyss, and whose mother, the Lady Elizabeth Wells, was daughter of the second Earl of Carysfort. She married Captain Wells, of the Royal Navy, and in his day the Holme Lode had its beginning in the gardens of Holme Wood House ; so that within a few yards of his drawing-room windows Captain Wells could step into his yacht and sail away down the lode, and on to Whittlesea Mere. To those who are not acquainted with fen terms, I may say that a lode is a sort of canal, of varying depth and width, but as wide and deep as many canals, dug out between two high banks, along which went the road or "drove," and these canals or lodes kept up, with the aid of numerous windmills, the drainage of the fens. We get the word *lode* from a Saxon verb, signifying "to lead," and meaning the deep trenches through which water is led to drain fenny places. When I first saw the Holme Lode, in the autumn of 1850, the drainage of Whittlesea Mere had just begun. For some years prior to that date that portion of the lode that came into the garden and lawn of Holme Wood House had been filled up, and the lode had its beginning on the other side of the road that skirted the Holme Wood garden. From thence it flowed to and under the Great Northern Railway, and, in an

arrow-like line, on to the mere. When the mere was drained, the larger portion of the lode was still preserved ; and, widened and deepened, it was the main stream that, with many tributary channels, led direct to the "engine-house," erected by Mr. Wells in 1851, with Appold's centrifugal pump, for the drainage of the mere. I sketched various scenes consequent upon this drainage, and they appeared in the "Illustrated London News." In the issue of that journal, April 26, 1851, is a page of sketches, one of which is entitled, "Stacking Reed by the Holme Lode"—or "Lodge," as it was misprinted. This was drawn close to the road that I have mentioned that led by the Holme Wood garden ; but that portion of the lode has been filled up with earth, and planted with trees and shrubs, and lodges (not misprints) have really been erected on the very spot thus prophetically marked out by the newspaper. In that sketch I represented the stacking of the reed, and showed two stacks that were worth £1,300, and were the property of the late Mrs. Coles, who was one of the chief reed merchants in the fens. Mr. Heathcote's sketch was made at a portion of the lode at a greater distance from the village, and, having been drawn in the year 1836, it represented the scene not only in its pre-drainage, but also in its pre-railway days. It shows all the salient and characteristic features of a fen landscape. There is the lode, now frozen over, to the delight of the skaters in their "pattens." There are the fen boats, of much use at the time of the reed harvest, and for bringing loads of peat from one point to another. There are the reed-stacks towards the right, and a man bearing reed going towards them. Behind him is the peat-stack, of a rich purplish-brown colour, formed of squares of peat, cut up like bricks, and ready for fuel. Beyond, in the middle distance, is one of the water-mills to keep up the fen drainage, with some farm-sheds in a clump of alders. Farther still is the golden belt of the reed-shore, with a long, level, light line where Whittlesea Mere itself mirrors the sky, and on the farther side of it is the long, horizontal stretch of the grey distance, with a few trees and poplars to break the monotonous level, and towards the left the higher distant ground towards Yaxley and Norman Cross, where were the barracks for the French prisoners. It is a truthful and characteristic sketch of a scene that might have been witnessed, not only in 1836, but up to the winter of 1850. After that came the drainage of Whittlesea Mere, and the alteration or obliteration of the chief features of the scene, which now only exists in memory or in such sketches as that we have now engraved from Mr. Heathcote's water-colour drawing.—CUTHBERT BEDE.

A HAPPY LAND.—The end of heathenism in the York Factory district in North-Western America is announced by Archdeacon Kirby. Beardy, the chief of the Samatawa tribe, and sixteen others of his party, were baptized last Whit Sunday. York Factory station was founded by the Church Missionary Society in 1854. Now, Mr. Kirby says, "heathenism, with all its cruelties, has become a thing of the past." He adds that although no doubt there is much of sin and imperfection in the Christian Indians, yet "there is not a house or tent in which prayer is not daily made to God, and not a single individual who does not regularly attend the services of God's holy day."

MUSICAL FAIRY TALE.—To lessen the drudgery of the earlier lessons in music, a lady, Miss Emma Shedlock, has written an amusing and instructive book, under the form of "a fairy tale," entitled, "A Trip to Music-land" (Blackie and Son). Some young dreamers are supposed to visit in fancy the land of King Harmony, and in his palace and kingdom, among his family and subjects, are introduced to the various Notes, the Clefs and Staves, with the different grades and signs of movement and expression—in fact, all that belongs to the rudiments of music. This first department of tuition is very often a mere matter of memory, sorely trying both to pupil and teacher, and Miss Shedlock's story may help to lighten the labour. The late Dr. Rimbaud called it an amusing, ingenious, and useful book.

ROBERT RAIKES, JOURNALIST AND PHILANTHROPIST.—The man's life and labours speak for themselves. With the aid of such self-revelations as are to be found in his letters we can see him as a simple-hearted Christian, sincerely desirous to glorify God by benefiting his fellow-men. This was the object of his life ; and he achieved it simply by a conscientious discharge of daily duty. As the varying circumstances of the hour pointed out to him new means of doing good, he at once availed himself of them. Both in letter and in spirit he seems to have realised the Apostle's ideal, "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." It was while industriously pursuing this vocation that he saw the evils which then cursed society ; and he availed himself of every opportunity, both in a private and pro-

fessional capacity, to apply the remedy. At first he had but a faint conception of the greatness of his work. When he gathered his first group of ragged children for Sunday instruction, to none would it seem more unlikely than to him that he was starting a movement which to the end of time would never cease to benefit mankind. He himself spoke of it as "an experiment, harmless and innocent, however fruitless it might prove in its effects." He tried the experiment because surrounding circumstances suggested it as a possible means of remedying the evils he lamented ; and when the experiment proved wonderfully successful, he followed still further the plain leadings of duty by making it known as widely as he could. The way in which his work progressed step by step proves that he was one of those unpretending benefactors to the world who waste no time in longing after impossible opportunities for unheard-of exploits, but simply do with all their might the work which lies nearest to them. Two other features in his character stand prominently out among a host of minor excellencies—his affection for children and his love for the word of God. Doubtless he had his failings, as have other men, but whatever they were, a grateful posterity may well afford to overlook them. For the sake of the good seed he planted—now become a great tree, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations—his name will be held in everlasting remembrance. Every Sunday school is a monument to his fame, every teacher and scholar a celebration of his work. And who can tell the countless memorials, unmarked by human observation, but carefully recorded in the chronicles of Heaven, of minds enlightened, homes reformed, and lives ennobled by means of the work which Robert Raikes began ? In a higher than earthly sense his life and labours are one more illustration in proof of Tennyson's couplet—

"Not once or twice in our rough island story
The path of duty was the way to glory."

—Robert Raikes, Journalist and Philanthropist. (Hodder and Stoughton). Alfred Gregory.

HARRIET MARTINEAU ON DUELING.—In her "Retrospect of Western Travel," Miss Martineau tells of a visit to a friend at High Wood, two miles beyond Hoboken, on the New Jersey side of the Hudson, near New York. "I was shown, on the way, the spot where Hamilton received his death wound from Colonel Burr. It was once made qualification for office that the candidate should never have fought a duel. Duelling is an institution not to be reached by such a provision as this. No man under provocation to fight would refrain from fear of disqualifying himself for office hereafter, and the operation of the restriction was accordingly found to be this : that duels were as frequent as ever, and that desirable candidates were excluded. The provision was got rid of on the plea that promissory oaths are bad in principle. The cure of duelling, as of every other encroachment of passion and selfishness on such higher principles as, being passive, cannot be embodied in acts, must be the natural result of the improved moral condition of the individual or of society. No one believes that the legal penalties of duelling have had much effect in stopping the practice ; and it is an injury to society to choose, out of the ample range of penalties, disqualification for social duty as one."

[The autograph manuscript of Miss Martineau's "Retrospect of Western Travel," published in 1838, was presented by the author to her friend Mrs. Bellenden Ker many years ago, with the remark that some day it might be worth something. It remained in Mrs. Ker's possession until recently, when it was bought by Mr. George W. Childs, of Philadelphia, who has a large collection of autograph manuscripts of famous writers, including almost the only one of Charles Dickens' works which did not come into the possession of the late Mr. John Forster.]

HARBOURING EVIL HABITS.—Even in our own recreations we should still pursue the great object of our lives, for we are called to be diligent in season and out of season. There is no position in which we may be placed but the Lord may come with the question, "What doest thou here, Elijah ?" The bow, of course, must be at times unstrung or else it will lose its elasticity, but there is no need to cut the string. A minister should be like a certain chamber which I saw in a house in the New Forest, in which a cobweb is never seen. It is a large lumber-room, and is never swept, yet no spider ever defiles it with the emblems of neglect. It is roofed with chestnut, and for some reason, I know not what, spiders will not come near that wood by the year together. The same thing was mentioned to me in the corridors of Winchester School. I was told, "No spiders ever come here." Our friends should be equally clear of idle habits.—Spurgeon, "Lectures to my Students."

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